1: Childl pl-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

863 ocisumbe defecates on the bed he will be slapped that he may not repeat, but less flagrant breaches do not seem to call for punishment.

868 *Language.* The progress of toddlers in language mastery is rapid. Some mispronunciations are allowed. Some children pronounce correctly more rapidly than do others. Correct use of the language including mastery of the complicated grammatical structure, however, is mastered much earlier than is the case with English-speaking children. One could almost say as does Father Van Wing of the Kongo child: 'À quatre ans il parle mieux sa belle langue Kikongo, qu'un Européen de douze ans ne parle la sienne.'[1] The baby's earliest babblings, as well as his later evident imitations of his elders, are all recognized as his attempts at self-expression which as a matter of course will straighten themselves out in due time.[2] Parents speak to their children in a tone distinctly different from that employed in ordinary adult conversation, but they rarely if ever use the baby's own mispronunciations or 'baby-talk' as do Europeans and Americans. This, and the fact that young children have much more practice than have our children, owing to the constant companionship of their elders, seems to be the secret of their rapid progress. Whether the nature of the language itself has any effect would be an interesting subject for investigation.

867 *Manners* are also taken on quickly during this time. Toddlers are not expected to practise any very wide range of the social niceties, but what they do, they do correctly. They give and receive with both hands. They both give and answer greetings with proper terms of respect. An outsider, however, can rarely observe such behaviour naturally in the young child. He has been so

606 514 *of the American Folk-Lore Society*, vol. xxxv, pp. 129 ff.) The terms used are as follows:

Exact terms	*Euphemisms*
To urinate, *oku sūnī*	*oku talamīlīko*, lit. 'to stand to something'.
(urine, *ovīsū*)	*oku litapela*, lit. 'to water oneself' (said of a child when it wets itself or its bed).
To defecate, *oku nia*	*oku enda kusenge*, lit. 'to go to the bush'.
(fæces, *eniña*)	*oku enda kofeka*, lit. 'to go to the country'.

The verb *oku nia* is used as a strong or profane expletive or interjectory phrase, especially in the first person with *etaili* (to-day), as *Etaili nda nia*. The verb is euphemonly left off.

Études Bakongo, p. 262.

Cf. the proverb: *Wa sensa, wa imba: wa tumbuka, wa popia*, 'He mispronounces, he sings: he babbles, he speaks.'

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

291 554 The practice and teaching of modesty seem to have been changing considerably for a long time. The influence of Europeans has doubtless had its effect, but more fundamental, it seems, has been the effect of increasingly generalized use of clothing, a process which began perhaps 200 years ago, but is yet far from complete. The time when boy or girl may begin to wear clothing is determined less by age than by the economic status of his family. There seems to be no shame (on the part of the child) connected with late wearing of clothes, but once a child has begun to wear a cloth, he or she is taught that it is shameful to take it off in the presence of those who are older. That this attitude is not of recent origin is attested by its appearance in a biographical narrative which goes back sixty years or more.[1] A large proportion of the women have only enough cloth for workaday wear for a short skirt, so that they leave the torso bare, but once one becomes accustomed to covering the torso always, she would be ashamed not to. This feeling belongs more to the field of economic status than to that of modesty. This shows up clearly in the strong objection to being ragged (*epêlê*), which has nothing to do with modesty but rather with economic status. The narrative concludes the teaching of social usage with this observation: 'From the time that children first enter into the school of understanding (*olondunge*), parents recognize that it is proper to respect them, rather than to revile them or tell them that which is evil.'

868 3. *Training in skills.* Before the age of eight or nine, children acquire few definite skills. Many of their games, however, are in imitation of adult activities, and adults recognize their preparatory nature and value. The little girl in caring for her younger sibling acquires certain skills, but with little or no definite adult guidance. Little boys begin early to make and set traps and snares under the tuition of an elder sibling or cousin. The first rat or bird caught belongs to the tutor. Games of many sorts are played: games with sides, round games, games with an 'It', imaginative games, and competitive games; games demanding skill, especially with dances of some intricacy. Games in imitation of animals are favourites, including 'birdcalls', in which very ingenious words are set to the bird songs.

604 867 4. The Ovimbundu have a custom somewhat comparable to what Vedder calls '*child insurance*' among the Herero,[2] i.e., the

[1] From a manuscript by Daniel Kalei of Bailundu.

[2] In Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177.

1: Child M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

sending of children to stay with relatives or friends. The Ovimbundu consider it definitely an educational device. From the age of six or seven years children are sent singly or in pairs to spend as much as one or two years in the home of the mother's brother. If conditions are favourable they may also be sent to stay with the father's sister or brother, and girls (other than the first-born) may be sent to the mother's mother. Formerly, prominent families arranged for their sons to stay in the king's capital. These periods spent away from home may continue well into adolescence. Not only relatives but also friends, blood-brothers, and *vakuacisoko* (members of a certain communal order)[1] exchange children for certain periods in this way. This custom is by no means dead. It is now being carried on even within the Christian community. Its educational purpose is obvious.

Later Childhood

(*From about nine years until puberty*)

There is no definite time which marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two periods. The chief criterion is one of physical development for as soon as the child is physically able, he will begin to assume a definite role in the work of the adult community. This rarely comes before nine years of age and may be somewhat delayed. Soon after a child gets the permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V (Λ) is chipped between the two upper front incisors.[2] This is a sort of national mark which many people omit to give their children at present. The line of observance is not sharply drawn as between Christians and non-Christians, as with the Herero.[3]

Formerly, the beginning of the period was well marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan. Most of the present older generation have had this experience and nearly every man of the present middle-aged generation as well. Nowadays the boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, he may begin to learn a trade, or he may be sent to school. Few Ovimbundu put their children in school before this age, and they evidently do not believe that younger children would profit by the instruction

[1] See *infra*, p. 114 f.
[2] See Hambly, op. cit., Plates XLIX and LIV.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

offered.[1] Boys may also help with younger siblings and fetch wood and water especially if there is no girl in the family, but it is my impression that at this age boys find much more time for play than do girls.

The girl of this age has already been performing useful tasks for several years in helping to care for the younger siblings or younger cousins, but the eagerness with which a girl takes up the care of a younger child makes it evident that she considers that activity rather in the nature of play. If there is no baby for whom she is expected to be responsible, she may borrow one from a neighbour. It seems almost more natural for her to carry a baby than to carry a doll (made of an ear of maize). This she will do only if she lacks a baby. Field-work and housework, chiefly the cultivation and preparation of food, are the adult activities which she must learn and which she regards as work.

The Ovimbundu consider that a child's socio-psychological education should be completed during early childhood. It is felt that after this time direct instruction should not be necessary, but reproof may be given should a child omit a usage or commit a fault. Should a child have plainly failed to attain the customary standards, a fatalistic attitude is often assumed as illustrated by this proverb:

[538]

Omõlã wa linga Cipupulungunju;
The child has become a worthless thing.
Nda longele, Nda kava.
I have done with educating, I am tired.

Acquiring skills. Later childhood is the time *par excellence* for technical education. That is the time recognized for beginning to learn a profession (*ocipinduko*), and a boy is expected to try that in which either his father or his mother's brother is expert. After that, should he wish to learn some other profession and can find a master, he may apprentice himself. All children, both boys and girls, are expected to learn to cultivate, but that is not counted as a profession as the following clearly shows:

'As to cultivating (*oku lima*), formerly the purpose was only for food, that one may not be hungry, whether during the dry season (*okuenye*), or during the rains (*ondombo*), that a person and his

[1] Considering the type of formal education available, the Ovimbundu are probably right: young children need far more activity than the formal school offers or allows.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1969 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

children may have enough food. Therefore while parents have their children with them, they teach them, saying, Let us work that we may have much food, for if a person lacks food he will die of hunger, or perhaps he may steal from another's field and get into trouble. Children must be diligent in working.

'But should a parent have a child who does not want to work, the parent may beat that child to teach him sense lest he may be a sluggard (*ociniãi*).[1] Parents have a proverb saying,

U wa ku vetela[1] *kepia,*
He who you beat in the field
ka ku vetele,
did not you punish
wa ku longisa olondunge.
he you taught sense.

'Before beginning, parents always encourage their children to work. Cultivation, however, is not counted as a profession (*ocipinduko*). Should a person cultivate a great deal so that from his field he has very much food, then people will take notice and say, So-and-so has enslaved a spirit[2] to the seeds, he has spirits (*ilãlã*) and they are helping him. That causes great fear, for people fear (those who) have spirits.[3] Thus, even though a person should purpose to teach another how to cultivate in order to have much food, the other will only apparently agree[4] because of his fear. Therefore the work of cultivation is not sought after as a profession by children, for they say, Being a farmer (*ongunja*)[5] is the work of sorcerers (*olonganga*) and not of ordinary people.'[6]

[1] *Vetela* is the relative mood (or form) of the verb *oku veta*. There is a pun in its use here since it is also used with *epia* in the sense of breaking ground for a new field.

[2] The verb used here—*oku andeka, andekela*—means securing the services of a person's spirit by killing the person (whether by witchcraft or by actual violence). The person is often a child and often of one's own family. In some cases parts of the body are said to have been kept for subsequent ritual use, e.g. bones and flesh dried and ground for 'fertilizer', or the skull for a drinking-cup. It will be seen that this is sorcery. The reflexive form of this verb, *oku liandeka*, means to form a blood-brotherhood, but it is a sorcerer's pact involving the sacrifice of a third person.

[3] The expression used means either to have or to have the reputation for having.

[4] He agrees with *ocenyo*, a term commonly translated as 'irony' or 'contempt'.

[5] This is the term which we commonly use for 'farmer'. Its connotation should be understood.

[6] This section is translated from a manuscript by Raul Kavita Evambi of Ciyaka.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

556 578 472 The attitude toward success in agriculture indicated by the foregoing is held in some measure toward marked success in other professions, but in lesser degree, except perhaps where trading is taken up individually or by two persons in partnership. One of the earliest observers, Pinheiro de Lacerda (*c.* 1790), noted that accusations of witchcraft were most often levelled at the wealthier members of the community.[1] This fear of success has continued down to the present day, but while trading was an open group enterprise in which many individuals acquired wealth, success in that field came to be accepted more quickly than in the more individualistic work of farming. At the present time, commercial activities are carried on largely by individuals alone or in a limited partnership, and the practice, or at least the suspicion, of witchcraft in connexion with them seems to be on the increase. Some may feel that similar attitudes with regard to successful results from cultivation of the soil are now held less strongly than formerly, but [754] I know of no evidence to support such a feeling. One of the commonest traditional patterns for witchcraft is that of a partnership of a senior and a junior member—of parent and child, or of mother's brother and sister's son. That is one reason why urgent suggestions by an older person concerning choice of a profession by a younger are looked upon with disfavour among the Ovimbundu.

● 868 562 A child should be taught enough diligence and application in cultivating that he or she may not lack the necessities in later adult life. Every boy will take to trading and bargaining almost as naturally as eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Commerce still retains so much of its former glamour that every boy will take it up if and when opportunity offers. The care of younger children comes even more naturally to the girl, and she must also learn the housekeeper's art. Many folk-tales and songs indicate a reluctance on the part of girls to dedicate themselves with diligence to cultivation. In the days of the rubber trade, when girls could also join caravans for the coast and to the interior as porters, there may have been some real basis for this, but at the present time girls are convinced and enthusiastic cultivators, almost 100 per cent.[2] The

[1] *Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes*, 5a Ser., p. 489 f.

[2] Women coming to live in the coast towns or in other European settlements where they have no fields or gardens find adjustment to life without agricultural labours very difficult.

1: Childh M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

heavy tasks and the close and constant routine of housework, on the other hand, sometimes require more than casual urging by the mother. Biographical evidence agrees with observation on this point, but nevertheless few girls reach puberty without attaining proficiency in the various household tasks. The decline of polygyny has probably hastened the girl's education in the household arts. When there is only one wife in the household, not only must she have more regular help from her daughters, but also it is more likely that the daughters will have to take on full responsibility at those times when the mother is unable for ritual reasons to take part in the preparation of her husband's food.[1] Biographical sources indicate that this tendency was already operating at least fifty or sixty years ago.

Every Ocimbundu assumes that his sustenance will come from cultivation of the soil. The 'professions' which a child may learn are therefore in the nature of side-lines. Although the Ovimbundu are not a true cattle-rearing people, they possess many domestic animals, especially dogs, pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens. Chickens are owned and looked after by both men and women, but the other animals only by the men. Boys may have small stock of their own, and a boy's economic independence most frequently begins with owning a chicken. Herding has been a function of the sister's son and even now there is reluctance on the part of boys to herd for their fathers. Animal husbandry is largely a commercial enterprise, save in the extreme southern tribes of Kalukembe, Ngalangi, &c.

The principal side-line 'professions' (*ovipinduko*) may be listed as follows:

For Girls

Basket-making, which is practised by all to a limited extent, but excelled in by relatively few.

Pottery-making.

Medical-practice and Divination (for conditions, see *infra*).

For Boys

Mat-making, which includes the making of four distinct types of mats each of which has its specialist; the making of trays and large baskets for granaries.

[1] i.e. at the times of her menstrual periods, after the birth of a child, &c.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

have for several years agreed to be the most effective. This is the method whereby babies learn their own language, a method which competent African teachers can easily understand and have adapted with good results.

Physical education and recreation would seem to be a simple matter among a people which spends so large a proportion of its time in out-of-doors occupations and one which, again, has almost universally good posture, and a large proportion of which is of good physique. Comparing the Ovimbundu with their neighbours to the north, the Ovimbundu are greatly superior both in physique and in posture. Umbundu forms of physical education are responsible at least in part. Carrying loads on the head, which is done by all ages and both sexes, has also had undoubted influence. Most important of all is the dance. The dance is very good physical exercise but it is much more than that. It is more than mere recreation. 'The dance is in most primitive societies an important factor in maintaining group solidarity.'[1] This is certainly true of the Ovimbundu. There is nothing which can take its place. It is doubtful whether the solidarity of any group of Ovimbundu can be firmly established or long maintained without the dance. They do adopt various foreign forms of recreation, but the dance meets a deeper need. Whatever new exercises and games may be introduced the physical educator cannot afford to neglect indigenous forms.

Music is of great importance to the Ovimbundu. The Church and mission schools have made much use of this musical ability and bent. The great choirs which give such pleasing renditions of European classical and sacred music would do credit to schools or colleges in any part of the world.[2] Less use has been made of native music but it is still sung, and some teachers have taken real interest in it. Not having described the Umbundu musical forms it is not possible to extend this evaluation. However, it must be noted that European music has been supplied with Umbundu words, and very successfully in some instances. Contrary to the predictions of several authorities, the result, most emphatically, is not 'a kind of musical pidgin'.[3]

[1] Krige, 1936, op. cit., p. 336.

[2] See article by Elisabeth Scattergood Chalmers, 'The Music at the Jubilee', *Missionary Herald*, 1930, pp. 333–8.

[3] See E. M. von Hornbostel, 'African Negro Music', *Africa*, 1928, pp. 30–62. He offers some interesting suggestions on the use of drums. His conclusions on

242 When a field is wearing out, the corn growing shorter and bearing
244 fewer ears to the stalk,(1) the woman makes a final planting of corn, sticking cuttings of manioc between the rows. Most of these cuttings take root and grow. It takes two or three years for the tubers of this plant to mature in an old field, but in some parts of the country where manioc is set in new land it matures within a year. The leaves of the plant are used as a vegetable with corn-meal, and manioc meal is used as a basic substitute when corn is short.

The onake or river-garden

241 In August a woman plants her onake, near a stream in the alluvial soil, or in some river bed. Here she plants corn which will be ready for eating during the January period of food shortage, as well as cabbage and other vegetables.

Organisation of labour

[462] Formerly men did the heavier work of clearing new fields, although, as has been noted above, since the introduction of wage labour much of the work is left to the women. Men may also have their own fields, the produce of which is sold to provide ready cash to clothe the family, pay taxes etc. The women's fields are intended to feed the family. Children help their parents in the fields, but also have their own plots. Gardens are made by each household, i.e. by each wife where there are a number of wives. Neighbours often co-operate during the harvesting
[474] period, after which beer is supplied by the owner of the field which has been harvested.(2)

HUNTING(3)

716 Most men and boys hunt, and women and children may help in burning
224 the grass and driving the game during the annual communal fire-hunts.
[463] But the professional hunter or ukongo is a recognised specialist, qualified by specific training and dependent on his knowledge of hunting magic
[468] and ritual for his success. A boy becomes a ukongo by an apprenticeship of about two years to an older hunter. This period culminates in a ceremony of inauguration, which may be attended by all the villagers but at which only the professional hunters dance. Several ukongo provide game, which is cooked for the feast; the dancing commences but the novice remains still and silent until he feels the "spirit of the head"; he then rises and distributes game to the villagers. Blood from the animals killed is sprinkled over his weapons, which have been made by the ukongo who has trained him. From now on his daily life is subject to certain ritual prohibitions: he must not sleep with his wife on the night before going on a hunt, special food and cooking-pots must be used for him, etc.

450 A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows,

(1) There is no information concerning the length of the farming-cycle.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) See Hambly, *Bantu Studies*, 1934, and *Ovimbundu*, 1934, pp.140-5; Cushman, 1944, pp.113-20.

862 "The practice of leaving the ociasabe in the village by day makes his elder sibling[1] responsible for much of his education....She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will initate her in many things."[2]

863 General instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, although sphincter control may have begun much earlier, since the mother feels every movement made by the baby on her back.

145 After weaning the physical development of the child proceeds more slowly than that of European peoples, and Childs believes that this may be due to deficiencies in diet.[3]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

857 From the time a child is able to walk until he is about nine years
861 old he continues seeing the same people as before, but he becomes less dependent upon the elder sister or cousin who helped him, and begins his life-long association with his age-mates. The sex-division of society starts for him at this stage: from about eight years boys begin to eat in the *onjango* with their fathers, girls continuing in the kitchen with their mothers. After about eight years the father becomes largely responsible for the education of boys, the mother for that of girls. During this period the child's education may be summarised under three heads:

869 (a) *Psychological*, chiefly fear of real or imaginary dangers. This is imparted by mother, elder siblings, and perhaps by a grandmother; there is a tendency for the teaching of fear to be done by women.[4]

867 (b) *Social*, chiefly usages of etiquette and acquaintance with the kinship structure and its requirements. A child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette that pertains to it. In the *onjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on all down the line. With the decline of the *onjango*, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage, and this naturally affects boys rather than girls.

864 Little direct sex teaching is attempted, and adults are reticent in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children. But since children live with their parents in one-roomed houses, it is inevitable that children should sometimes observe intercourse.

868 (c) *Training in skills*: Children are taught few definite skills before the age of eight or nine, but many of their games are in imitation of adult activities.

604 From the age of six or seven years children are usually sent to spend
857 one or two years with the mother's brother. They may also be sent to the father's sister or brother for a period, and, in the case of girls, to the mother's mother. Formerly prominent families sent their children for a

(1) Either a brother or sister may act as nurse.
(2) Childs, op.cit., p.95.
(3) Ibid., p.97.
(4) Childs actually writes " 'the side of the basket' " (p.100), but seems to be referring simply to female relatives.

time to the village of the paramount chief. These periods spent away from home continue into adolescence. Not only relatives, but also friends, blood-brothers and *vakuacisoko* (see below) exchange children in this way. 604 857

Later childhood

No definite time marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two stages. As soon as the child is physically able, he begins to assume a definite role in the community. Soon after a child gets his permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V is chipped between the two upper front incisors. Formerly the beginning of the period was marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan; today a boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, or begin to learn a trade, or be sent to school. A girl starts to learn field-work and housework. 852 858

Professions

A boy is expected to learn the profession or *ocipinduko* in which his father or his mother's brother is expert, and after that, should he wish to learn some other side-line profession, he may apprentice himself. All children, both boys and girls, are expected to learn to cultivate, but that is not counted as a profession. The principal *ovipinduko* (professions) listed by Childs are: for girls, basket-making, pottery-making, medical practice and divination; for boys, mat-making, wood-working, rope-making, thatching, fishing, apiculture, hunting, smithing, and medical practice and divination. The last three, as has been mentioned above, are "sacred" and entered under special conditions. 462 828 ● [463]

"Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognised, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will come only with marriage."(1) 826 [672]

The coming of European commerce, industry, and government has created new types of employment for boys and men, some of which cause a prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. There are no estimates of the number of persons employed by Europeans, or the average length of their absence from home. 178 466

ADOLESCENCE(2)

Childs found that the onset of puberty was late among the Ovimbundu, coming between fourteen and sixteen years for girls and between fifteen and seventeen years for boys. Soon after puberty young people generally stop sleeping in the parents' house. The girls congregate in kitchens and each boy builds himself a house, in which he will live through adolescence 882

(1) Childs, op.cit., p. 110.
(2) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp. 58-9 and 111-18.

3: Hambly E-6 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Among direct educational forces are the home training given by parents and the mutual responsibility of children and their mother's brother, whose reciprocal obligations have been explained. Family life is undeniably an important institution whose power is by no means suppressed by the strength of the village community and tribal organization. 867

Initiation, which may or may not coincide with puberty, is perhaps the most potent direct influence in formation of character and the inculcation of principles tending to tribal solidarity. Formerly warfare and hunting were more important than they are today, consequently initiation rites imposing hardship and emphasizing the importance of concerted action, had a greater social value than they have at present. 867 881

Formal instruction in industries such as iron-working, or professional hunting, indicates one aspect of occupational training. In these instances there are apprenticeship and an initiatory rite. All children are, however, subject to an indirect industrial education through the agency of play, while a few, according to desire and aptitude, become experts in some particular occupation. 874 [868]

At all times the force of suggestion is at work in the home, in the men's council house, and through everyday observation of the conduct of elders. Probably folklore stories also have an indirect educational value, because some of the fables show the desirability of courage, honesty, and foresight, at the same time deprecating cowardice, stupidity, and low cunning. 869

In chapter IX religious beliefs are discussed, and, in connection with these, standards of conduct are outlined. Although the Ovimbundu have a belief in a supreme being and creator (Suku), and although they believe in survival after death, there is no evidence to show that conduct and education are influenced by theological beliefs. Suku, who is vaguely conceived, is far away and uninterested. He issues no commands. Neither is there a belief in punishments and rewards after death. The standards of conduct are based on utilitarian principles which secure harmony and unity. 771 869 [776]

The efficiency of the direct and indirect educational forces of the Ovimbundu is attested by the history of the tribe. The indigenous system of education, supported by favorable environment, consolidated these people so that they became the dominating power in Angola. Moreover, their cohesion has been such that three centuries of European contacts have failed to eliminate all the basic elements of their tribal life. 177

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

197 cattle and a few other traits from the Vakuanyama of southern Angola, and there seems to be no doubt that the vocabularies of the Ovimbundu and the Vakuanyama have been influenced by these southern contacts. Yet structure will prove the final arbiter in deciding linguistic relationships, for the Ovimbundu as extensive travelers have widely distributed their vocabulary.

Caution is necessary in making comparisons of Umbundu with surrounding languages; for, although Kuanyama has received careful attention, and the researches of Meinhof have given a reliable background for Ovambo and Herero speech, the language of the Vachokue of eastern Angola and the speech of the Mussurongo of northern Angola, call for a comprehensive work. Moreover, there yet remains the task of providing a standard Umbundu dictionary and grammar, and pending the collation of this linguistic material there are no means of determining the exact syntactical, phonetic, and other relationships of Umbundu.

VOCABULARY

192 Apart from a broad question of the linguistic evidence of culture contacts, there are points of interest connected with the recording of vocabularies in a restricted area. Under the heading "Nature Lore" attention was called to an extensive Umbundu vocabulary connected with those activities which underlie the economic structure. The vocabulary showed that the Ovimbundu are keen observers whose activities have resulted in the formation of a large vocabulary arising from trades and occupations. In nature study many fine distinctions are made; thus, there are words to distinguish not only trees and plants of economic importance, but varieties of snakes and lizards which are of no great economic interest.

[868] In order to test further mental activity and the acquisition of vocabulary, an Ocimbundu girl of about twelve years of age was asked to name some of the objects in my collection. Without hesitation she made the following list. The object was indicated, then the child gave the name. This information was checked by an adult interpreter who found that the child was correct in every instance, although the objects do not specially appeal to the interests of a young girl.

The objects named by this girl are as follows:

Ocimanda. Wooden dish.
Omutopa. Tobacco-pipe made from a horn.
Etenga. Pipe for smoking hemp.
Ocinunga. Brass bracelet.
Ukinda. Switch made from the tail of an ox.
Opaulonga. Leather pouch for belt.
Upi. Pounding stick.
Ombanja. Gourd with a long neck.

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At Caconda I obtained the basket of a medicine-man which contained 759
a human tibia, a hoe for digging in graves, and a round stone for pounding 791
the bone before mixing it with fat and charcoal. Medicine-men still make potions for internal use, and these are usually carried in small horns suspended round the neck, or the paste may be contained in the carapace of a tortoise. In every way the medicine-man is still functioning, and his tasks are fundamental to the social and religious life of the Ovimbundu.

At an early age children specialize in their play which has a bearing 868
on the business of life. Boys make wooden-tipped arrows, play at hunting, and shoot at tubers which are rolled along the ground. Girls take clay from the potters to fabricate their own small cooking pots, and young girls attempt the coiling of basketry.

Men are the musicians, and among these a high degree of specialization 533
is observed. In a large village there are likely to be only a few competent drummers, and only a few men who play the small iron-keyed instrument called ocisanji. Osaka is a ritual game played only by men, and only when a village headman or a king is dying. The ball (ombunje) is made by sewing 535
lizard skin over a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter. A 524
man continues to dance with this little ball clenched in his outstretched 755
hand, while another dancer hits the muscles of his arm to make him release the ball. This game is thought to give strength to the sick man. There is a transfer of the endurance of the dancers to the invalid.

Preliminary observation in some villages occupied by Ovimbundu is 197
disappointing in its suggestion of Europeanization. The foreign culture is, however, a thin veneer, and further research shows a strong persistence of indigenous custom and belief quite near to centers of Portuguese influence.

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